

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y219/01 Summer 2024 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

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Paper Y219/01 series overview

Y219 is one of 24 units in Paper 2 for the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about 100 years through a short-answer essay question and a traditional essay question. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short-answer essay and a traditional essay. Candidates must answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short-answer essay question, candidates need to consider the significance or importance of both issues, factors, individuals, or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both, they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels, candidates need to assess the issues they discuss and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

In this paper the number of candidates answering either Question 1 or Question 2 was evenly split between the two.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short-answer essay reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question discussed at least two relevant issues in depth gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question showed a lack of understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay were unable to support their response with relevant or accurate material did not focus on the precise wording of the question made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1 (a)

1

(a) Which of the following had the greater impact on Russia during the period from 1929 to 1941?

(i) The purges

(ii) Collectivisation

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

Responses needed to assess which of these two factors had the greater impact on Russia between 1929-41. Many candidates had sufficient knowledge to address both factors. However, some candidates were not fully aware of the extent of the purges and only referred to the purge of members of the Bolshevik Party. The more accomplished responses included the purge of the Army and those involved in the Five-Year Plans.

Some candidates did not show a clear understanding of the differences and the links between Collectivisation and Industrialisation in the context of the Five-Year Plans. Some candidates described knowledge of these factors rather than using their knowledge to assess their impact on Russia.

The more accomplished responses used their detailed knowledge to assess the impact of the factors and, most importantly, provided a judgement in relation to the question in their concluding paragraph.

Exemplar 1

Therefore, the less convincing argument is that the Purges had a greater impact on Russia between 1929 and 1941. The Purges secured Stalin's political ~~opponent~~ position as he removed opponents. The Purge of Political opposition began in 1934 with the murder of Kirov, a ~~top~~ leading party member who had spoken out against Stalin. ~~After~~ Later, the Moscow Show Trials allowed Stalin to further eliminate Political opposition, as Stalin forced opponents into false confessions of ~~being~~ conspiring against the State, for example Bukharin, a known supporter of the NEP, was labelled as a 'right wing deviationist and an agent of the West', and was arrested. Alongside Bukharin, Rykov, Kaganovitch and Zinoviev were also arrested following Stalin's show trials. Stalin's purges also included intelligentsia, such as Mandelstam who had labelled Stalin 'murderer of the peasants' for his policy of collectivisation. ~~The Purges therefore had~~ Mandelstam was arrested and died in Siberia in 1938, highlighting how Stalin's purges allowed him to silence critics.

and retain his power. Additionally, the Red Army was also purged, as many leaders were loyal to ~~Stalin~~ Trotsky over Stalin due to his leadership in the civil war. This was hugely impactful on Russia as it allowed Stalin to strengthen his army and ensure it supported him, preventing coup and ensuring ~~the~~ national defence after Hitler had vowed to 'destroy communism'. However, ultimately the purges were ~~only~~ required due to the impact of collectivisation. For example discontent ~~grew~~ had grown by 1934 within the Bolshevik party due to the huge human ~~cost~~ with up to 8 million dead from collectivisation, ~~leading~~ leading to support for Bukharin growing. This ~~was~~ therefore made the purges necessary to eliminate Bukharin, and other opponents, securing Stalin's position. Overall, collectivisation had a larger impact on Russia between 1929 and 1941 as collectivisation and its failures made the purges necessary for Stalin to retain control.

Exemplar 1 is a very good example of a concluding paragraph providing a substantiated judgement to Question 1 (a). The response attained Level 6, 9 marks.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* Assess the reasons for the unpopularity of the Provisional Government by October 1917. **[20]**

The purpose of this question was to enable candidates to identify the reasons that led to increasing unpopularity of the Provisional Government and to provide an assessment of which of those reasons was the most important. Most candidates understood the purpose of the question and the differentiating factor was their knowledge and understanding of the events and issues in the period from February to October 1917.

There was a significant number of responses that provided a description of the events of 1917 rather than addressing the question directly and then provided some generic analysis in their concluding paragraph. The more successful responses identified some reasons and then used their knowledge of issues such as: the failures of the Provisional Government; the role of the Bolsheviks; the role of individuals such as Kerensky, Lenin and Trotsky and events such as the First World War, July Days and Kornilov Revolt to provide an assessment related to the question.

Misconception



Kerensky was not the leader of the Provisional Government for the whole period from February to October 1917. He held various posts in the early months and became Prime Minister in July 1917.

Question 2 (a)

2

(a) Which of the following were of greater importance in bringing about the White's defeat in the Russian Civil War?

- (i)** White weaknesses
- (ii)** Strengths of the Red Army

Explain your answer with reference to both **(i)** and **(ii)**.

[10]

The purpose of this question was for candidates to analyse the reasons for the result in the Russian Civil War and to provide an assessment as to whether it was the White's weaknesses or the Red Army's strengths that were more important. Most candidates understood the purpose of the question and, therefore, the differentiating factor in their responses was the quality of their knowledge and analysis.

There were a significant number of candidates who provided generic responses for both factors which included generalised knowledge concerning leadership and geography for both sides. For example, nearly all responses referred to the disunity of the White's leadership but relatively few gave examples, such as Kolchak, Kornilov Denekin and Yudenich or some explanation of the differing aims of the Whites. Most responses focused on the leadership of Trotsky as the main strength of the Red Army and, in particular, his use of an armoured train. The fact that the Reds controlled the railway system was also highlighted by many candidates.

Exemplar 2

White's weaknesses was of greater importance because the whites had very little power when it came to the ~~being any power~~ large cities such as Petrograd and Moscow. They mainly had rural areas which meant that they couldn't rally support from the ~~the~~ working class in the city. The white army also faced a significant amount of desertions because ~~they felt~~ that they had no hope as they had inferior resources and arms. This meant that they couldn't fight to their full capabilities and decided to desert instead of fighting a losing battle. White army ~~also faced~~ ~~to~~ was an amalgamation of many different ideologies and groups who often had opposing opinions, but came together only in wanting to see the downfall of the Bolsheviks. The wide range of ideologies in the party led ~~to~~ ~~in~~ to instances where the white army would fight ~~themselves~~ within itself ~~losing~~ resources and manpower and most of all, losing morale and unity. These reasons prove that it was indeed white weaknesses that caused their defeat.

Exemplar 2 is a paragraph from a response that generally addressed the question and provided a broadly appropriate answer. However, it missed the opportunity to include more detailed knowledge and analysis. The response could have given examples of the White controlled areas, such as Ukraine, and in particular, some examples of the different ideologies that were present in the White Army such as Monarchists, militant socialists and foreign interventionists. This response attained Level 4, 5 marks.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* To what extent were the causes of the 1905 Revolution resolved by the time the First World War started in 1914? **[20]**

This question proved to be the one that candidates had the greatest difficulty in addressing. The purpose of the question was for candidates to identify the causes of the 1905 Revolution and then provide an assessment of whether, in period from 1905-14, any of those causes had been resolved by 1914. The more successful responses were from candidates who started by identifying the causes and then provided some detailed knowledge and analysis of the period 1906-14 to establish whether the problems were resolved. Most responses tended to conclude that causes, such as the demand for democracy and industrial unrest were not resolved by 1914.

A significant number of candidates identified the causes under the generic headings of political, economic, and social factors. For some candidates this led to providing some generalised knowledge and analysis which proved difficult to establish to what extent these causes had been resolved. There were some responses that used the February Revolution 1917 as the point at which to judge whether causes had been resolved.

Misconception



Stolypin was not Prime Minister for the entire period 1906-14. He was assassinated in 1911.

Assessment for learning



Always read the question carefully. Identify the key words and phrases and it is advisable to use those words throughout a response and this should help to keep an answer focused on the specific demands of the question.

Exemplar 3

The biggest unresolved cause for the 1905 Revolution was the liberals demand of a national elected assembly. This was immediately appeared in the October Manifesto with the creation of the Duma. However, it was immediately stripped of all power by the Tsar. In April 1906, he issued the Fundamental Law which meant he had to authorise any bill proposed, installed an unelected Upper Chamber that could veto, and arranged a large loan with France. These measures took away and power that the Duma granted to the liberals. Therefore, it demonstrates that the causes of 1905 were mostly unresolved by 1914. Furthermore, the first Duma resented this and were immediately dissolved in June 1906. This led to the Vyborg Appeal uprising led by Kadets and labourists which was brutally put down by Stolypin. Similarly, the second Duma was made up by

SR and SD revolutionaries that criticised the Tsar, leading to their dissolution in June 1907. In response, the Tsar limited elections in the Duma to only propertied classes - a small minority of traditionally Tsar supporters. Therefore, the Tsar took away the power of the ~~intelligentia~~ Duma for the intelligentsia that demanded a national elected assembly in 1905. Therefore, it is clear that the causes of 1905 were mostly unresolved by 1914.

Exemplar 3 is a paragraph from a response to Question 2 (b) in which the cause ('the liberals demand of a national elected assembly') of the 1905 Revolution is identified and a good attempt to provide focused analysis in relation to the question. This response attained Level 5.

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